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Regional Overview: Middle East

29 October-4 November 2022

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Last week in the [Middle East](#), political violence reached its highest levels in Yemen since the end of the UN-mediated truce on 2 October. In Syria, local gunmen clashed with Islamic State (IS) militants in Dara city, while state forces conducted large-scale counter-IS operations in Iraq. In Iran, police forces used lethal force to disperse demonstrations in Sistan and Baluchestan province. In Palestine, seven Palestinians — four attackers, two militants, and one rioter — as well as one Israeli settler were killed in multiple violent events in the West Bank. In Israel, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to power after his right-wing coalition won a majority in the country's legislative elections.

In **Yemen**, political violence increased significantly last week, reaching its highest levels since the end of the UN-mediated truce on 2 October. The rise was primarily driven by violence between Houthi and anti-Houthi forces in Lahij and Taizz governorates. In Lahij, clashes between Houthi forces and Southern Transitional Council (STC)-affiliated forces along the border with Taizz governorate contributed to the 269% increase in violent events last week relative to the weekly average for the preceding month flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker also warned of increased violence in Lahij during the preceding four weeks. In Taizz, Houthi and Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) forces clashed along the fronts around Taizz city. Elsewhere, increases in political violence were also recorded in Al Jawf and Marib governorates, where the deployment of Houthi forces and IRG forces, respectively, led to clashes with local tribal militias.

In Abyan governorate, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants continued to target STC forces with IEDs in Al Mahfad district, where security forces decreed a state of emergency on 1 November ([Aden Al Ghad, 1 November 2022](#)). AQAP activity contributes to the 171% increase in average weekly violent events in Abyan in the past month relative to the weekly average for the preceding year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker also warned of increased violence in Abyan during the preceding four weeks, following an increase in AQAP activity.

At the political level, efforts to renew the truce continued last week, with UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg meeting with Omani and Houthi officials in Muscat, Oman ([Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, 30 October 2022](#)). The US Special Envoy, Tim Lenderking, also traveled to the UAE and Saudi Arabia, urging the Houthis to cooperate with the UN ([US Department of State, 3 November 2022](#)).

Last week in **Syria**, local gunmen supported by regime forces clashed with IS militants in Dara city in southern Syria, in an attempt to expel the latter from the city. The clashes resulted in the death of at least five IS members, one gunman, and three civilians. Meanwhile, Russian warplanes resumed airstrikes against IS positions in Homs province and rebel-controlled areas in Aleppo province.

Elsewhere, Turkish and rebel forces' shelling of positions controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces and the People's Protection Units in the north of the country declined significantly last week.

In **Iraq**, counter-IS operations led by Iraqi state forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) increased last week, as large-scale clearing operations targeted IS hideouts in Diyala and Anbar provinces. Notably, the PMF besieged and cleared several IS tunnel complexes in the western Anbar desert.

Meanwhile, fighting between Turkish forces and the Kurdistan Workers' Party continued to decrease for the fourth consecutive week last week; this trend is driven by a decline in violence in Duhok province, which is the focus of Turkey's Operation 'Claw-Lock.' In contrast, Turkish airstrikes targeting Kurdish militias increased in Erbil and Ninewa provinces last week compared to the week prior.

In **Iran**, there was a notable decline in nationwide demonstration events triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini last week following a spike the week prior. In Sistan and Baluchestan province, police used live ammunition to disperse members of the Baloch ethnic group demonstrating to demand justice for anti-government protesters killed on 30 September in Zahedan city. Police forces reportedly killed 16 people at a Khash city demonstration. Baloch group members also demonstrated at the Taftan gold mine, claiming historic rights over the mine. These trends contribute to the 100% increase in violent events in Sistan and Baluchestan last week relative to the weekly average for the preceding month flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Surge Tracker](#), which warned of increased violence in Sistan and Baluchestan during the preceding four weeks.

In **Palestine**, multiple fatalities were reported during violent clashes and attacks in the West Bank last week. On 29 October, an armed Palestinian carried out a shooting attack in Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron, reportedly killing a settler and injuring at least three others. The assailant was shot dead by an off-duty Israeli soldier, with reports identifying the gunman as a Hamas affiliate ([Times of Israel, 30 October 2022](#)). Israeli forces killed a further three attackers as they carried out separate car-ramming and knife attacks south of Jericho city, west of Ramallah city, and at the Iron Gate in Jerusalem's Old City.

Meanwhile, on 3 November, Israeli military and border police forces raided Jenin city and Jenin refugee camp, clashing with Palestinian Islamic Jihad-affiliated Kataib Jenin militants. Two militants were reportedly killed, including a 'commander' with links to the Lion's Den militant group. On the same day, Israeli forces reportedly killed a Palestinian rioter during clashes that erupted after they raided Bayt Duqqu village near Jerusalem. These trends contribute to the 153% increase in average weekly violent events in the West Bank in the past month relative to the weekly average for the preceding year flagged by [ACLED's Subnational Threat Tracker](#). The Subnational Tracker also warned of increased violence in the West Bank during the preceding four weeks.

Note: This dashboard automatically updates to cover the latest four weeks of data released by ACLED. Use the date filters to view data for the one-week period covered by this Regional Overview.



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